

Just a sec. Hey, is there a Butz here. Seymour Butz. Hey, everybody! I wanna Seymour Butz!

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

Have you ever played a Dizzy game based in a realistic, modern-day setting? Nope, thought not. That's because the Oliver Twins preferred for our two worlds never to collide, to preserve the mystique. So when it transpired - 90% of the way into the development cycle - that Movieland Dizzy was edging too close for comfort, they approached Codemasters to discuss spinning off the title to form its own franchise. Thus Seymour was born.

So, "Is it true that Seymour plots are just discarded Dizzy storylines?" Commodore Format pondered while quizzing Codemasters' co-founder, **David Darling**, in February 1993.

"Yes and no. It all stems back to Seymour Goes to Hollywood. It was originally created for a Dizzy In Hollywood-type game but if you look at the Dizzy games we've always placed him in fantasy landscapes, never a real world area. So we decided to create a *new* character which would feature exclusively in real world scenarios. Hence, Seymour. All the games Seymour has starred in since then have been designed especially for Seymour and that has really developed him as a character."



Spectrum coder **Fred Williams** elaborated in Retro Gamer issue 42...

"Codemasters and the Olivers preferred to keep Dizzy in his home fantasy environment. But we argued that the movieland design didn't actually feature any real-world film studio stuff and was entirely set in the movies themselves. But there was no way we could persuade them so we tweaked the game so that we ended up with

real-world studio stuff with a *new* character, although we kept the Dizzy graphic adventure title engine. We thought if you've got a game mechanic that works, just keep using it."

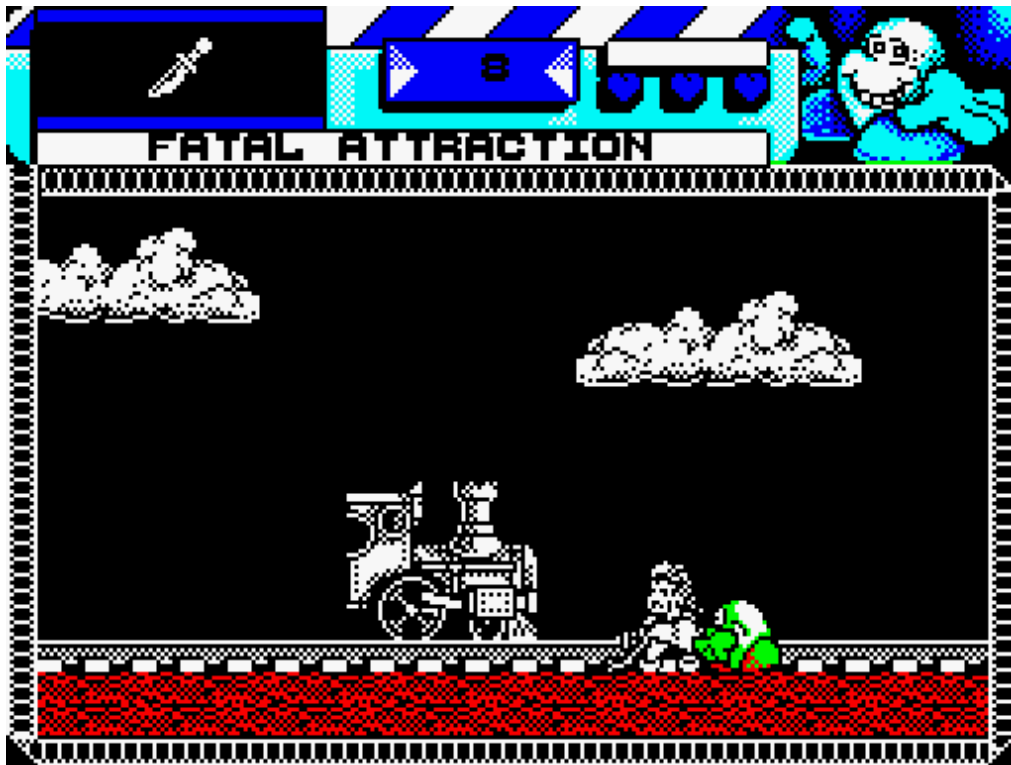


Sticking with the food theme (eggs and Kwik Snax etc.), Seymour is rather like a happy-go-lucky potato with oversized football supporter's foam hands and clown feet. Whilst foregoing Dizzy's signature roll and boxing gloves, somewhere inside the Mascot Generator 5000's inner workings, he gained a limb-swinging bouncy walk, and goofy grin that alone could have led to his arrest and incarceration in a secure psychiatric facility. Naturally, Seymour would be the bailiwick of a young audience yet to develop the dexterity for quick-fire arcade games, or the cerebral capacity for complex puzzles.

In his interview for Retro Gamer, **Fred Williams** deliberated over *another* key detail to differentiate the two leads...

"The Dizzies tend to be 'Dizzy's got everyone into trouble, and has to get them all out of the mess he put them in', and set in fairytale worlds. Seymour's plots were about everyone being let down by someone else. Seymour had to step in and make everything right by cheering people up."

We were first introduced to the Codies' new baby via cassettes mounted on the covers of Amstrad Action and Your Sinclair in December 1991. I believe they're commonly known as *cover tapes*. No idea why.



A mini-game entitled 'Seymour: Take One!' served as a prequel to the main course to whet our appetite. It shares the premise and mechanics of the trailered title, though in a concentrated format that wouldn't demand the colossal investment of time Dizzy adventures were notorious for.



In a scrolling title screen, Seymour's meteoric rise to international stardom is elucidated. Upon first encountering Seymour he's working as a humble odd job man for a Hollywood movie studio, though unbeknownst to him his life is about to be turned upside down.

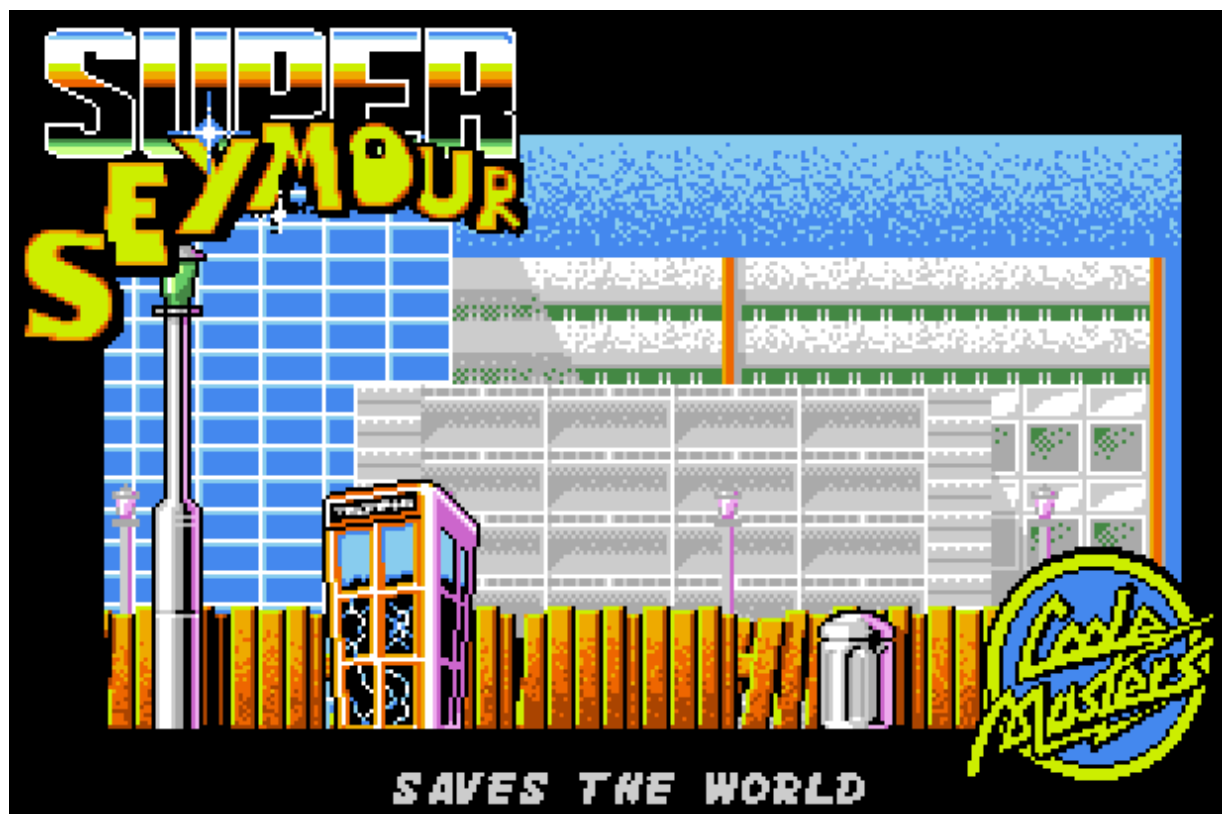
A mistyped memo results in the entire film crew jetting off to a non-existent location, jeopardising the completion of the movie. If we can play substitute to the star of the show to get the production back on track we're promised a glittering career in the movie biz.

Beginning with Seymour Goes to Hollywood, unleashed in time for Christmas 1991 as Codemasters prepared to unveil Dizzy 5, five games in total were released under the same umbrella; Super Seymour Saves the Planet in the same year, with Wild West Seymour, Sergeant Seymour RobotCop, and Stuntman Seymour emerging the following year. Codemasters certainly weren't going to let it escape anyone's

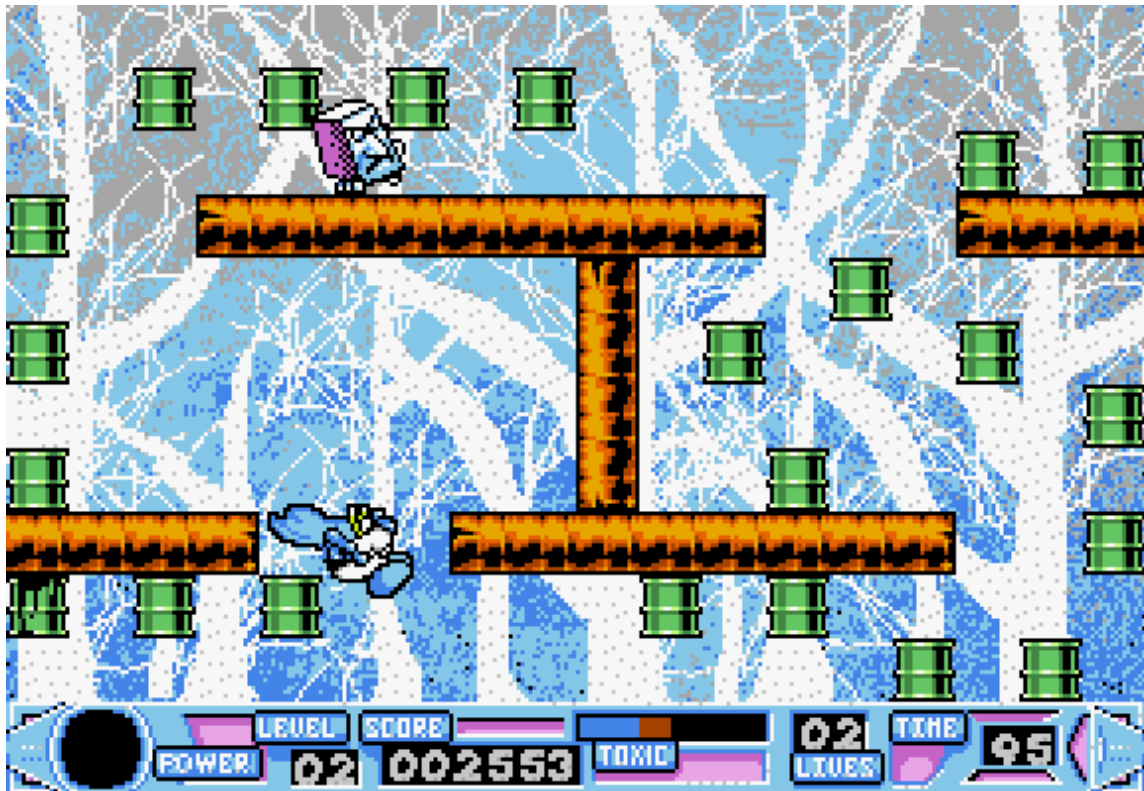
attention that these were part of a series! If nothing else they were experts in brand awareness.



Only the first and third of these were made available for the Amiga, whilst the entire collection could be purchased for the three main 8-bit contenders. In their second lease of life they were repackaged as part of a five-game set and sold for the price of a single premium release. This variety pack constituted two Dizzy-esque adventures, a shameless (albeit environmentally aware) Bomb Jack clone, a top-down action-maze game and a traditional side-scrolling platformer.



In Mr Spudhead's *second* Amiga outing - 'Super Seymour Saves the World' - our hero finds his habitat has been swamped with toxic pollution, giving rise to a throng of Mutato Heads whose desire to wreak havoc must be thwarted. Barrels are cleared in the order indicated to accumulate maximum points before they can explode in your face, decorating the single screen edges with Smash. For mash get Smash!



Nonetheless, the more interesting title in the Amiga line-up revolves around Seymour's trip to Tinseltown, the title no doubt inspired by Frankie Goes to Hollywood. It's essentially another entry in the Dizzy pantheon in all but name and theme. Even the star of the show isn't that far removed what with his rotund figure and armless, legless design. Being conceived on the Spectrum and ported to the Amiga with few significant adjustments to the gameplay, Seymour must have seemed a bit lacklustre to 16-bit players. Still, he *did* make a dent in the Gallup sales charts at number 11 in October 1992, and received several above average reviews ranging between 52% and 82%.

You assume the role of... well that goes without saying, who has emigrated to the land of glitz, glamour and plastic smiles to star in Dirk E. Findelmeyer the second's latest flick. Of course there's a snag for you to resolve - the director has gone AWOL on a jolly to Miami, leaving the movie script locked in his safe. It's your task to unravel a series of

simplistic puzzles by collecting and manipulating an inventory of objects in order to get your inflated mitts on the crucial text, allowing shooting to finally commence.

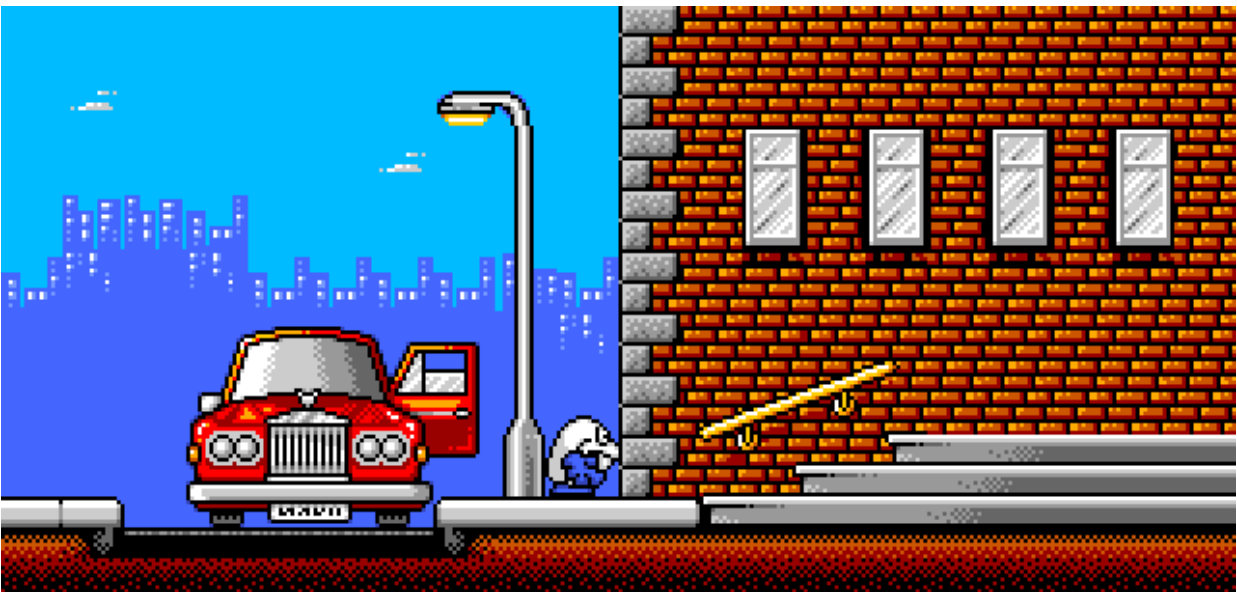


This will entail navigating a labyrinthine studio complex incorporating a hodgepodge of sets from recognisable movies, and talking to strangers to acquire additional objects and unlock unexplored areas. I don't use the 'labyrinth' word lightly - most screens look almost identical so it's effortless to get lost if you decide not to map the territory, as advised in the manual. With the script safely in your possession, it can be dangled like a carrot on a stick to tempt the celebs dotted around the landscape to jump on the production's bandwagon.

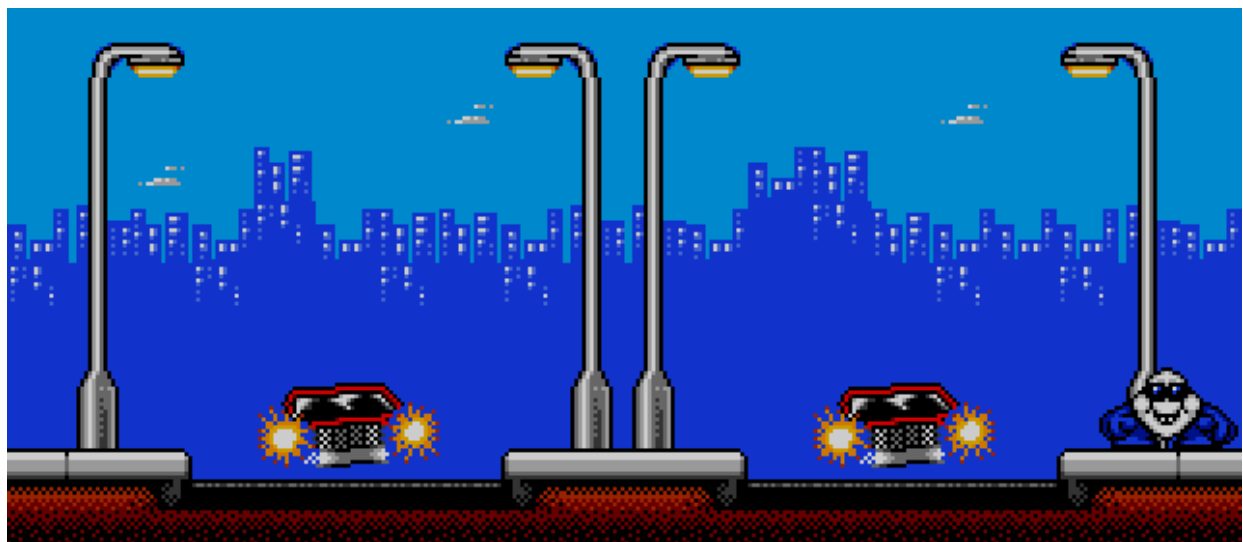
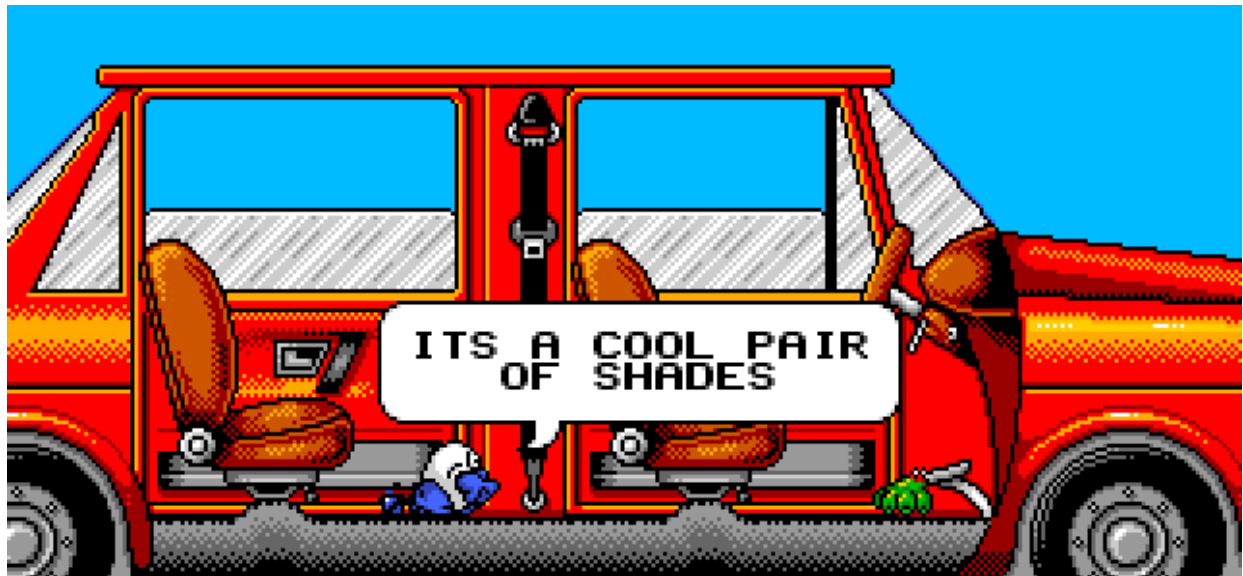
Seymour designers, Big Red Software, had just twelve weeks to adapt the game once the decision to extricate Dizzy from Movieland had been agreed. Little wonder then that it all feels so much like slipping on a comfy pair of slippers. No-one was *quite* sure what it was Big Red devised for a surrogate eggtagonist, not even his progenitors themselves who informed us at the time that "Seymour's a squelchy blob who

wanders around in front of an urban sprite-based landscape, a bit like Dizzy (only with fewer trees)."

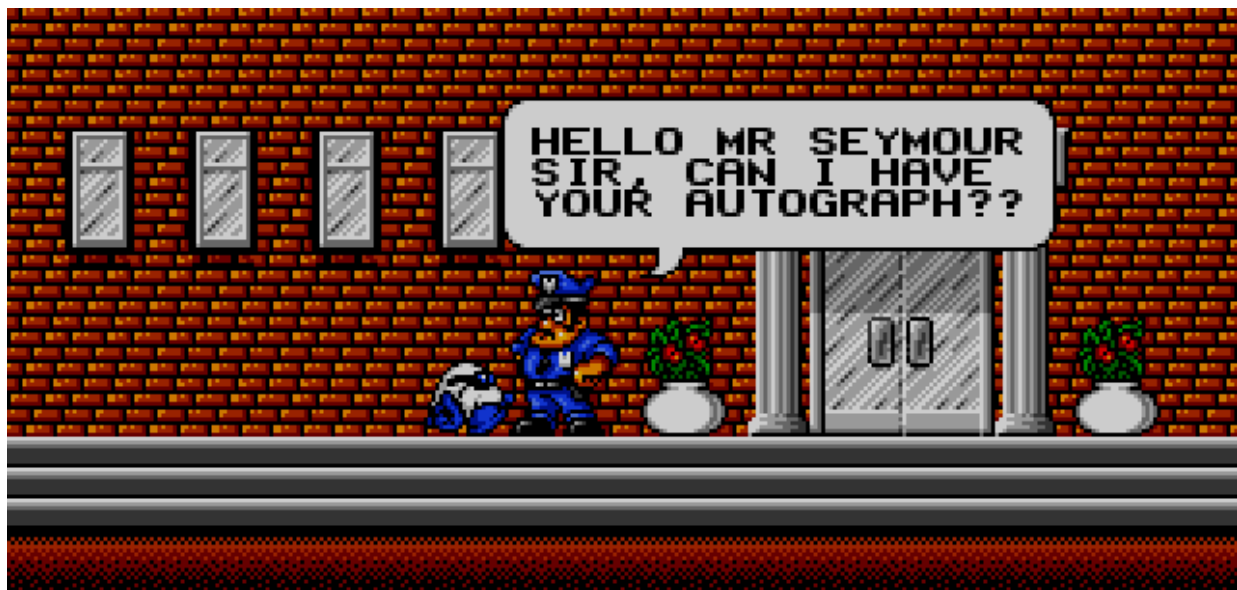
While Big Red devised the game, it was actually coded by Optimus Software, the team comprising coder, Shane O'Brien, graphician, Brian Hartley and musician, Allister Brimble. Seymour Goes to Hollywood is a flip-screen affair that permits the possession of up to only three objects simultaneously, so really focuses your attention on completing the task at hand before progressing. That or juggling between them, making a note of where you dropped any items you haven't got room to store, and won't require in the immediate future. A mechanic that applies equally to Treasure Island Dizzy, though the puzzles here are a fair bit more straightforward to accommodate the target audience.



One of the earliest puzzles entails sidling past a security guard and into the studio. To do this you have to convince him you belong there... by donning a pair of cool shades retrieved from your car. Ta-da! Instant celeb status!



He even asks for your autograph to demonstrate how convincing you are.

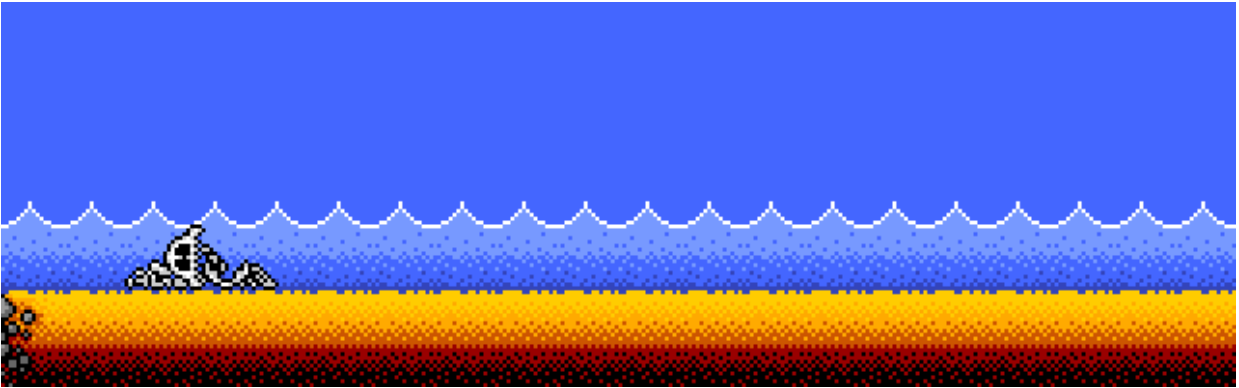


Later you placate a gorilla with a banana butty, learn how to speak Tarzanese, reunite a forlorn pirate with his lost parrot, and reassemble Frankenstein's monster in order to crash through a door to an otherwise inaccessible area, a 'secret lab' in fact.



Unlikely as it is, should you find yourself stuck on a puzzle you'll be trapped in a dead-end until you can suss it out. It's all rather linear in that sense so don't imagine you can

dabble here, there and everywhere, and it will all click into place in the end. Painting by numbers springs to mind.



Each time you examine an object Seymour exclaims "gosh! an anvil", or whatever else it happens to be. For added emphasis sometimes he'll prefix his goshes with a 'golly' or a 'by', as in 'by Jove, I think I've cracked it'. That would have been appropriate for an egg smasher such as Seymour is.

He never ceases to get excited over the most pedestrian of objects. All quite reminiscent of Play School it occurred to me, or Sesame Street if that was your surrogate TV teacher of choice when you were a wee nipper.

If it's a key Seymour stumbles across, fair enough. These allow him to access the various movie sets kept hidden behind locked doors, reached via interconnected back lots. Though a walking-talking maris piper cropping up in the background scenery of The Wizard of Oz, Grease, Frankenstein (Frank *Einstein* actually), Tarzan or King Kong may not go down too well with the big shot movie moguls when you're auditioning for your next role.



Other sets are more generic, while some are puns/allusions to real movies. Examples include 'Flash Boredom' featuring Ming the Merciless, 'Munchkin Valley' (being a reference to Wizard of Oz of course), 'Sherlock *Bones*' (sounding a bit like *Holmes*), and Rick Bracey, a stand-in for Dick Tracy.

Sherlock is particularly relevant here, almost serving as a descriptor for ourselves (as we'll get to later), and moreover, whenever we bite the dust we turn into a pile of bones. I suspect the inference wasn't deliberate, but it *does* make *me* sound rather clever doesn't it? And that's what we're *really* here for.

Another pseudonym for our tottering tater as suggested by Ming is "pesky ball of lard". Could that be a clue to our origin, or just a creative pejorative I wonder?

Seymour's graphics deserve special mention as they capture the essence of Dizzy beautifully. Cartoonish, and elegantly minimalist, they're a perfect fit for the commission. They certainly wouldn't look out of place in a CBBC animation, brought to life in the old school frame by frame manner.

Music too is appropriate, if not particularly memorable or inspiring. Austere as it is, it somehow doesn't become tiring as you might expect. Quite amazing given how lengthy a game Seymour is.



Travelling between Pippa's reception desk and sets - eight altogether encompassing 50 screens - you must accumulate 16 Oscar awards to disperse amongst the cast (*before* they begin filming?) and ultimately blow up the director's safe with dynamite to recover the celluloid equivalent of the crown jewels. Pippa - for the trivia fans among you - was the name of one of the monsters featured in the Oliver Twins' Fast Food Pac-Man clone.

Just when you think you have a handle on your motivation, you discover a sting in the tail, a plot twist if you will. Someone has been murdered on set and it's your duty to get to the bottom of it and ensure the dastardly perpetrator is brought to justice. You didn't hear that from me if anyone asks - it's a major spoiler!!! Sssshhhh.

I also didn't mention that the corpse later agrees to be in your movie as he lies prostrate on the floor, demonstrating a thespian aptitude to rival IKEA Knightly. Headlining the latest edition of the 'Revelations I'm Also Not Admitting To Times', your efforts to identify the undead victim's killer possibly-maybe could lead you to the cowboy seen loitering inside Saucy Sal's Saloon on the 'Big Country' set.

With the assistance of Sherlock and Rick Bracey, you gather evidence to prove his guilt and issue an arrest warrant, ensuring that the yellow belly will spend the rest of his days sleeping on a concrete bed and eating porridge. You can *also* guarantee he's going to jail for a very long time. At least until he says sorry and promises not to murder any more RADA members anyway.

All things considered, I think Codemasters and the Oliver Twins were prudent not to merge Dizzy's fantasy land with reality if Seymour is the result. It's not that it's a terrible game, and it's certainly value for money given what a lengthy escapade is entailed. Seymour is just a bit bland, and consequently forgettable. Many of the screens are indistinguishable and the dialogue minimal, repetitive and perfunctory. Without Dizzy's whimsical setting to entice our inner adventurer, it's too mundane to hold the attention for very long, leaving Seymour looking like a reworked, diluted Dizzy title that didn't quite make the grade. Ah.